

## Lancashire County Council update

### Mike Cliffe

#### Skelmersdale TrainLink update:

- The TrainLink service successfully transferred to Headbolt Lane on Sunday 9th June 2024 with a new route serving Bank Lane and County Road into Kirkby.
- Integrated bus / rail ticketing products have also been introduced for purchase on TrainLink bus and Merseyrail services.
- Leaflets advertising the service will be delivered door-to-door in Skelmersdale later this month.
- LCC facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lancashireecc/posts/-an-upgrade-to-skelmersdales-trainlink-bus-service-will-be-bringing-lancashire-a/893185192850736/>
- Merseyrail: <https://www.merseyrail.org/tickets-passes/daily-travel/skelmersdale-train-link/>
- Timetable information: <https://tiscon-maps-stagecoachbus.s3.amazonaws.com/Timetables/Merseyside/2024/319-9Jun24.pdf>

**Preston platforms 3c/4c:** The Community Rail noticeboard for the West of Lancashire Line has now been installed on Platform 3c at Preston Railway Station. Hanging baskets, artificial flowers and brackets have been delivered to Avanti West Coast for final installation along with additional seating.

**Preston Butler Street cycle link:** The new segregated cycle link on Butler Street has been surfaced and lined. The missing link between Preston City Centre, Avenham Park, Miller Park and South Ribble now has railway approvals and will be delivered later in Summer 2024.

**Restoring Your Railway:** Burscough Curves and Midge Hall: No LCC funding at the present time for additional business case work regarding infrastructure and services on the West Lancashire Line.

**Merseyrail extension studies:** Further updates have been requested from the Liverpool City Region regarding their study work to use battery electric multiple units to extend from Headbolt Lane – Wigan and Ormskirk – Burscough Junction – Preston.

**Network North Plan:** Published in October 2024 by the Department for Transport at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/network-north> Detailed guidance from central government has been delayed by the general election. Future priorities are being looked at by Lancashire County Council.

**National Access for All programme:** The Department for Transport announced the successful Access for All projects to be delivered between 2024 and 2029 in May 2024. Lancashire's successful scheme is Church and Oswaldtwistle which will have further design development work undertaken.

**Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans:** The County Council has consulted on draft plans for developing walking and cycling networks across Lancashire which will set the scene for future investment in greener, safer and healthier travel opportunities. The plans are

available to view via: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/roads-parking-and-travel/cycling-and-walking-strategy/>

**LCC Bus Service Improvement Plan:** The County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan includes a range of measures to make buses better with improvements including:

- Simpler cheaper fares i.e. £1 on Sundays
- Multi-modal and multi-operator ticketing in Preston, Fylde Coast and Skelmersdale TrainLink
- Bus service enhancements

Further details can be found via: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/roads-parking-and-travel/bus-service-improvement-plan/>

## COMMUNITY RAIL NETWORK UPDATE

- Our **Regions Support Team** led by Paul Webster works with members across the country on day-to-day community rail support provided by Jenni Jones (SWR & GWR), Ian Davis (North), Rhiannon-Jane Raftery (Wales), with Paul supporting the East Midlands and Anglia and Martin Clarke the South East. Our **Thematic Project Developments Team** is led by Martin looking after Education (through Karen Bennet), Training & Development (Alex Peel) and Integrated Sustainable Transport (Gary Shipp).
- The **Community Rail Development Fund** (for DfT accredited CRPs) & **Small Grants Fund** for 2024-2025 are open! The CRDF can support projects up to **£25,000** (subject to match funding) and the SGF is for Station Adoption Groups projects up to **£1000** from CRP projects up to **£2500**. The fund is open until **31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**, although projects do not need to be completed until **30<sup>th</sup> June 2025**. Details and application forms are here - <https://communityrail.org.uk/member-services/grants-funding-and-bursaries/funding-available-through-crn/>
- Following the **election**, we can assure you of our close work with the DfT to ensure the voice of community rail is heard. We have written to Louise Haigh, Secretary of State for Transport, and Lord Peter Hendy, Minister of State for Rail, congratulating them on their appointments and hope to secure meetings soon, as well as building broader links across the new administration and with regional mayors. The King's speech on **17<sup>th</sup> July** is likely to include legislation to nationalise the railways and plans for GBR. With the arrival of so many new MPs, we suggest writing to your local MP to introduce your organisation and community rail – we have a **letter template** on the website for you to use.
- We continue to develop the range of **Corporate Partners** who can support and help your work. On the Corporate Partners information page <https://communityrail.org.uk/member-services/how-our-corporate-partners-support-our-members/> there is now a **Support Request Form** to register the volunteering support

you need - <https://communityrail.org.uk/member-services/how-our-corporate-partners-support-our-members/members-request-for-volunteer-support/> Our newest offer from Team BA can provide media and comms mentoring and support for Community Rail Network members and **discounts (or free) hire** of comms equipment for your events.

- In 2025 the 200th anniversary of the first passenger carrying railway is being celebrated through **Railway 200** with many national and local events planned. This will be a year which marks not just trains and infrastructure, but also the role of railways in social and community development over the last 200 years... and will also look to innovation and the future too. The celebration is not just for the North East as the aim is to showcase and open-up collections of railway history in local libraries, museums, and railway stations too. To find out more about Railway 200 see <https://railway200.co.uk/> or join one of our regular on-line Q&A sessions for members - the next is on **5<sup>th</sup> August** from 1400 to 1530 – book here - <https://communityrail.org.uk/training/railway-200-qa-session/>
- Our partnership with Scouts on the **Platforms for Change** scheme continues to grow with 270 Scout groups registered and matched with 130 station adoption groups – a reach to over 4.500 young people! The scheme includes railway safety, station based activities, rail confidence and a rail experience. Please continue to spread the word about the project to local Scouts organisations and to your station adoption groups and encourage them to visit our page to register their interest. Full details of the project are also on the page - <https://communityrail.org.uk/member-services/community-rail-education-network/platforms-for-change/>
- The final touches to the new **Value & impact of Community Rail** report are currently being made (thank you to the members who contributed towards this). This important report about the local difference your CRP makes, its reach and outcomes, will provide incredibly useful information when talking to partners and completing funding bids. We expect this report to be published in September.
- We have recently produced a **Policy Position Paper** on Sustainable Transport and Travel and have another paper in development on Accessibility for the Railway. These can be found here - <https://communityrail.org.uk/resources/policy-papers-and-consultation-responses/>
- Three **national dates** to add to your calendars (booking links will be shared shortly) are:
  - Our **Community Rail Conference** takes place in Nottingham on **8<sup>th</sup> October 2024**
  - All members are encouraged to attend the **Community Rail Network AGM** which takes place on-line on **5<sup>th</sup> November 2024** (1400-1530)

- The National **Community Rail Awards** is taking place in Newcastle on **13<sup>th</sup> March 2025** with **Lumo & Hull Trains** as headline sponsors – so get thinking about projects to nominate!
- The **events and webinars** page of the website contains many opportunities for members and partners (<https://communityrail.org.uk/events-and-campaigns/training-networking-webinars/>). These include:
  - ‘Demystifying and developing Corporate Fundraising Ideas’ - **17<sup>th</sup> July**
  - ‘Meet our Corporate Partners’ - **17<sup>th</sup> September**
  - ‘Getting involved with your LCWIP’ (local cycling & walking infrastructure plan) - **26<sup>th</sup> Sept**
  - We continue to run a range of specialist networks (although some are taking a summer break):
    - Tourism (**Next date TBC**)
    - Education (**Third Thursday each month**)
    - CRP Chairs (**Next date TBC**)
    - Community Rail Officers (**Next date TBC**)
    - Integrated Sustainable Transport - **11<sup>th</sup> July & 5<sup>th</sup> September**

If you missed any webinars, many of them can be watched back by following the links on our website.

- **Bespoke training** for members is also available – recent sessions have helped CRPs think about their governance structure, overall aims and visions and their marketing & communications messages.
- Members can also apply for **Training Bursaries** of up to £200 for courses of their own choosing that will help CRP Officers in their role.
- Finally, please send Erin ([news@communityrail.org.uk](mailto:news@communityrail.org.uk)) any **good news** stories you'd like to share with the wider community rail family through our social media channels or twice monthly e-bulletin ‘Community Rail News’ – which now reaches over 2000 subscribers. We are always looking for interesting examples of what CRPs and station adoption groups are doing across the country and to amplify the great work you are doing to a national audience.

**Paul Webster – Community Rail Network – Regions Support Manager – July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024**